

Lake Michigan Fisheries Team
March 30-31, 2000 – Sheboygan

Notes

(prepared by Bill Horns, April 3, 2000)

Present: Brad Eggold, Pradeep Hirethota, Jim Moore, Brian Belonger, Tom Hansen, Bill Horns, Mike Toney, Paul Peeters, Steve Hogler, George Boronow, Terry Lychwick, Steve Fajfer, Mark Opgenorth, Matt Coffaro, Randy Link.

Next Meeting: June 22-23, Sturgeon Bay

- 1) Chub rules. The LMFT supported continuation of provisions of FH-44-98 expanding chub fishing opportunities. I will confirm this decision with our Policy Committee (Horns, Moore, Eggold), and prepare the needed yellow and green sheets so that the NRB, at its May meeting, can consider approval of public hearings. [Normally approvals of hearings by the NRB are quite perfunctory, but I will try to use this opportunity put the specific rule proposal in the context of other chub issues and lakewide lake trout restoration efforts.] We deferred discussion of additional chub rule changes, with the idea of initiating separate discussions with sport and commercial fishers about changes that would benefit commercial fishers without creating additional problems.
- 2) Surplus yearling cohos. Latest projections indicate that we will produce approximately 35,000 extra cohos, 7% over the Wisconsin quota for Lake Michigan. No final recommendation was made about the disposition of these fish. Before taking this up again with the Policy Committee, I will a) work with the Lake Michigan Committee to clarify lakewide policy on stocking surplus fish, b) find out from Al Kaas whether or not stocking shortfalls are expected for other species, and c) obtain a final estimate of the surplus.

The discussion of surplus cohos led to a discussion of the difficulties we have in obtaining timely information about stocking. I will urge Al Kaas to attend our next meeting for a discussion of this issue.

- 3) Possible funding for projects through the Natural Resources Damage Assessment process for the Sheboygan River. We reviewed project topics proposed by the other DNR staff and by FWS, and developed a list of additional project ideas. I will prepare a summary of our recommendations, circulate it to the LMFT by e-mail for review, confirm it with the Policy Committee, and pass it on to Candy Schrank and Mike Staggs.
- 4) Regulation of importation of ornamental fish and other exotic organisms. The LMFT adopted the following recommendation: *The Wisconsin DNR, in conjunction with DATCP, should aggressively pursue regulatory authority to control the importation of ornamental and aquarium fish, plants and other living organisms from the*

temperate zones to prevent the introduction of diseases and additional exotics into our waters.

- 5) Strawberry Creek. We discussed four options summarized by Mark Opgenorth. The preferred option would involve a 1200 GPM 6" Wisconsin Trash Type pump and 6" PVC pipe with glued couplings. The estimated one-time cost would be approximately \$34,000. Operation and maintenance costs are estimated at \$540/day. There is some uncertainty about the exact volume of water that this system would provide to the Strawberry Creek pond, but the best current estimate is that it should be capable of providing 600 GPM. The LMFT agreed to a two part strategy for moving forward: 1) Mark, with assistance from Paul Peeters, will draft a specific proposal for funding of the current preferred option, specify a path for the PVC pipes, and attempt to identify and obtain any needed easements or approvals for laying the pipe. The anticipate funding source is Salmon Stamp. 2) Meanwhile, Mark will continue to look into feasibility of backing up Strawberry Creek with by deploying a Chrisafoley pump and pipes already owned by the Department.
- 6) Lake Trout Task Force. I will draft a one-page discussion document suggestion an approach to solving the problem, including ideas about how to form and charge a Lake Trout Task Force.
- 7) Operation/maintenance plan for the *Perca*. The Boat Committee presented a draft plan. Brad agreed to incorporate suggested changes, and re-draft the plan in the form of a memo to the Guidance Team, with approval lines for signatures. [I have already received this. Thanks, Brad.]
- 8) Lake Michigan Commercial Fishing Board recommendation. The LMCFB has asked the NRB to direct the Department to work with the Wisconsin Paper Council to come up with money for the removal and disposal of white perch in Green Bay. In addition, Mark Maricque has raised this issue with the Upper Green Bay Citizens Advisory Team. I agreed to draft a memo to Doug Rossberg, on behalf of the LMFT, saying that we do not believe that white perch control efforts should be part of a Department proposal for ecosystem restoration with funding that might arise from a Fox River NRDA, but that the fishers might have a basis for suing the companies directly on the basis of economic damage to the commercial fishery. Because this issue will come before the UGBCAT this Thursday, I need to get this out immediately. I will seek approval by the LMFT Policy Committee before I send a final recommendation to Doug.
- 9) Annual Conservation Congress Meetings. Tom Hansen agreed to summarize some background information regarding CC Advisory Question # 68 (regarding floating and drifting gill nets), for use at the Spring Meetings. [Tom has already followed through on this, and I will forward his summary to Al Phelan for electronic circulation around the state.]

- 10) Special studies. We discussed our policy on helping to initiate special studies requested by sport or commercial fishers. In some cases we work to design special studies for external funding (e.g., whitefish trap nets), but in other cases we ask the interested parties to develop specific proposals for our review (e.g., trawling for whitefish or chubs). We are always open to cooperating with well-designed studies supported by external funding, but time limits our ability to actively work in the development of special studies. Ron Kazmierczak has asked about how a request for a study of trawling for chubs should/will be handled. I will discuss this with Ron.
- 11) Possible marking of all stocked chinooks with OTC. Michigan is informally asking us to consider renewing efforts to mark all stocked chinook salmon. Steve Fajfer raised strong concerns about the effects of oxytetracycline on the immune systems of fish and about the palatability of the treated feed.
- 12) Commercial Fishing Task Force listening sessions scheduled for April 1, 8, and 11. Some LMFT members expressed concerns about not being kept up to date about the CFTF process. I will try to do better. By the way, the first listening session was poorly attended, but went well. Concerns were raised, but acceptance by sport and commercial fishers who attended the meeting seemed to be good.
- 13) New fisheries program positions. Regional Water Leaders have been asked to develop prioritized lists of position needs by April 21. I will draft an LMFT response to this, in which I will forcefully raise our concerns about the erosion of commitment to staffing field work on Lake Michigan. This will also be an opportunity to highlight the need for a boat captain to operate the Perca and for permanent seasonal positions to work on the creel surveys.
- 14) Issuance of scientific collectors permits to USFWS. I agreed to raise this issue with the Fish and Habitat Board.
- 15) We discussed whether it would be possible to allow a commercial fisher to bring in incidentally caught lake trout or lake trout stomachs for a diet study. Mike Toneys and Tom Hansen will try to work something out.
- 16) Appointment of an advisor to the Great Lakes Fishery Commission representing the public at large (for Lake Michigan). Some names were suggested (Phil Moy, Mike Hansen, P.T. Schultz).
- 17) I agreed to e-mail the latest version of the Fisheries, Wildlife, and Habitat Management Plan for Wisconsin to the LMFT.
- 18) Some concerns were raised regarding the filling of Brian Belonger's position. One concern was that if an experienced fisheries biologist does not lateral into this position, it will automatically be filled from the list of new recruits. Because of the importance and technical demands on this position, the LMFT did not feel that it

should be filled at the entry level. I will talk about this with Doug Rossberg and suggest that he look into the approach Brad took in handling a similar situation.